

**EAU CLAIRE
LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

Meeting of November 5, 2012

Members Present: Katrinka Bourne, Kathy Mitchell, Patrick Kurtenbach, Jim Seymour, Ken Ziehr, Karen Nusbaum, Carrie Ronnander

Members Absent: None

Minutes. The minutes of the October 1, 2012 and October 24, 2012 meetings were approved as written.

The meeting was chaired by Katrinka Bourne and called to order at 4:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

1. **Discussion and Comment on Confluence Redevelopment Project.** Stuart Schaefer, representing Haymarket Concepts, LLC, was present at the meeting to discuss the Confluence Redevelopment project. Mr. Schaefer distributed information to the Commission pertaining to the project relating to the rationale of why the buildings along the west side of South Barstow Street were included in the project. He noted that there were two primary reasons why the buildings were proposed to be razed. He stated that the buildings in question have significant structural deficiencies making it cost prohibitive to renovate the buildings. He indicated that the foundations of the buildings near the river are collapsing. In addition, the periodic flooding of the Eau Claire River has caused significant damage to the basement flooring and support columns in the buildings over the years. Secondly, the concept plan provides public access along the Eau Claire River in the form of a pathway and greenway system. Currently, 2 South Barstow is located at the river's edge. He noted that providing pedestrian access along the river greatly enhances the project and the entire Downtown.

Mr. Schaefer discussed the option of not including the buildings along South Barstow Street as part of the project. He noted that in addition to the structural issues, retaining the buildings makes the project less financially feasible. It would not be as attractive for investors and the dormitory building would accommodate 200 fewer residents.

He added that they had researched the availability of grants and using the tax incentive for the project, but this still does not make the project financially attractive for investors.

Mark Blaskey, Senior Project Manager, for Krech Ojard and Associates, spoke in support of the project. Mr. Blaskey stated that his firm had prepared the existing building conditions analysis for the project. He provided an overview of the structural concerns that they found as part of their analysis. Issues found included: the foundation for 2 South Barstow Street, which had been filled with sand, is not stable and future flooding may cause additional damage; and 6 South Barstow does not have its own bearing walls and is supported by the buildings to the north and south. He

added that future flooding will continue to comprise the foundations of these buildings. Attempting to address or correct these problems would be extremely expensive.

Mr. Schaefer discussed options of keeping just the facades of the buildings, but indicated that this was also not feasible. Using some distinctive portions of the buildings facades as some type of an exhibit was an option.

Sharon Hildebrand discussed the scale of the buildings within Downtown, noting that the character of Downtown and its pedestrian spaces are defined by the size and design of its buildings. She questioned what the proposed buildings would look like in relation to neighboring buildings and suggested that the developer should consider this as they develop final designs for the project.

John Mogensen spoke in support of the project. Mr. Mogensen stated that at one time he had considered purchasing 6 South Barstow Street, but decided not to due to concerns about its deteriorated structural condition. He noted that he has a record of working with older buildings, but there are some buildings that are not feasible to restore. He stated that based on the findings of the structural analysis, that if the Confluence Project does not occur, that he would probably consider razing several of the buildings for a redevelopment project of his own.

Brian Larson spoke in support of the project. Mr. Larson stated that he did not feel that the buildings had architectural significance.

The Commission discussed the project and Ken Ziehr stated that he felt that based on the designation of these buildings to the National Register, that several agencies had determined that the buildings do have architectural significance.

The Commission also discussed the draft report discussing the National Register status of the properties within the redevelopment area. This report was requested by the City Council. Ken Ziehr stated that a sentence should be added to the second full paragraph on page 6 stating that the Commission does consider the buildings as locally significant since the City uses the same review criteria as that used by the State Historical Society. The Commission also discussed the findings of the structural analysis.

ACTION TAKEN: Kathy Mitchell moved that the second to last paragraph on page 6 of the report to the City Council be deleted. Jim Seymour seconded the motion. The motion carried with Pat Kurtenbach voting no.

Kathy Mitchell then moved that the report on the historic status of the buildings be forwarded to the City Council and that the Commission recommend that if the project proceeds that the developer should incorporate architectural elements of the design of the façade of the buildings facing South Barstow Street into the new building which would be characteristic of the

neighboring buildings and the area in general. Jim Seymour seconded the motion. The motion carried with Pat Kurtenbach and Katrinka Bourne voting no.

2. Update of Landmark Activities and Properties, including:

- A. Update from Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation.** Pat Kurtenbach provided an update of Foundation activities. One of the projects the Foundation is currently working on is for the house hunt done in conjunction with the Leader Telegram.
- B. 1819 Lyndale Avenue.** Pat Ivory informed the Commission that the State Review Board would be reviewing the National Register nomination for 1819 Lyndale Avenue on November 16th. The City Council passed a resolution in support of the nomination.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Patrick Kurtenbach, Secretary